

**CLAIMS:**

5 What is claimed is:

1. A method for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

receiving user input to a Web page; and

10 storing the user input and a corresponding Web page field identifier in a directory server, wherein when the Web page is next accessed, the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier are retrieved from the directory server.

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2. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.

20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of Web pages.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

25 matching the Web page field identifier to an entry field identifier located in the Web page; and inserting the user input into a field associated with the entry field identifier.

30 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving a Web page retrieval request having a Web page identifier identifying the Web page; sending the Web page identifier to the directory server; and

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receiving the user input and Web page field identifier from the directory server in response to sending the Web page identifier.

5 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising inserting the user input into a field of the Web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input and  
10 the Web page field identifier are stored in a Web page entry of the directory server identified by a user identifier and a Web page identifier.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is  
15 encrypted before being stored in the directory server.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the Web page field identifier is a HyperText Mark-up Language tag.

20 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the directory server is an LDAP server.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is  
implemented using a plug-in application to a Web browser.

25 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is implemented using a background application.

13. A computer program product in a computer readable  
30 medium for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

first instructions for receiving user input to a Web page; and

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second instructions for storing the user input and a corresponding Web page field identifier in a directory server, wherein when the Web page is next accessed, the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier  
5 are retrieved from the directory server.

14. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.  
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15. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of Web pages.

16. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:  
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third instructions for matching the Web page field identifier to an entry field identifier located in the Web page; and

fourth instructions for inserting the user input into a field associated with the entry field identifier.  
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17. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:

third instructions for receiving a Web page retrieval request having a Web page identifier identifying the Web page;  
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fourth instructions for sending the Web page identifier to the directory server; and

fifth instructions for receiving the user input and Web page field identifier from the directory server in response to sending the Web page identifier.  
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18. The computer program product of claim 17, further comprising sixth instructions for inserting the user input into a field of the Web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

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19. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising third instructions for encrypting the user input before storing the user input in the directory server.

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20. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the computer program product is a background application.

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21. An apparatus for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

a processor;

an input device coupled to the processor; and

20 a network interface coupled to the processor and to a network, wherein the processor receives user input to a Web page via the input device and sends an instruction to a directory server, via the network interface, to store the user input and a corresponding Web page field identifier in the directory server, wherein when the Web page is next accessed, the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier are retrieved from the directory server.

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22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.

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23. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality

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of Web pages.

24. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor matches the Web page field identifier to an entry field identifier located in the Web page and inserts the user input into a field associated with the entry field identifier.

25. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor receives a Web page retrieval request having a Web page identifier identifying the Web page via the input device, sends the Web page identifier to the directory server via the network interface, and receives the user input and Web page field identifier from the directory server in response to sending the Web page identifier via the network interface.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor inserts the user input into a field of the Web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

27. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the user input and the Web page field identifier are stored in a Web page entry of the directory server identified by a user identifier and a Web page identifier.

28. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor encrypts the user input before the user input is stored in the directory server.

29. A method, in a directory server, for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

receiving user input to a Web page from a client

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device; and

storing the user input and a corresponding Web page field identifier, wherein when the Web page is next accessed by the client device, the user input and  
5 corresponding Web page field identifier are downloaded to the client device.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular  
10 Web page.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of  
15 Web pages.

32. The method of claim 29, further comprising:  
receiving, from the client device, a Web page identifier identifying the Web page;  
retrieving the user input and Web page field  
20 identifier in response to receiving the Web page identifier; and  
sending the user input and Web page field identifier to the client device.

25 33. The method of claim 29, wherein the user input and the Web page field identifier are stored as a Web page entry identified by a user identifier and a Web page identifier.

30 34. The method of claim 29, wherein the user input is encrypted before being stored.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein the Web page field

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identifier is a HyperText Mark-up Language tag.

36. The method of claim 29, wherein the directory server is an LDAP server.

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37. A method in a data processing system for maintaining state information for a Web page, the method comprising:

receiving a user input to the Web page and an identifier associated with the user input;

10 storing the user input to the Web page and the identifier associated with the user input in a server; and

responsive to a subsequent request for the Web page, retrieving the user input and the identifier from the server.

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38. The method of claim 37, wherein the server is a directory server.

20 39. The method of claim 37, wherein the identifier is a tag from the Web page.

40. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

25 Placing the user input retrieved from the server in the Web page using the identifier.

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